

REMARKS

The final Office Action was issued on pending claims 19-35. Claims 19, 21, 22, 25 and 30 stand rejected and claims 20, 23, 24, 26-29 and 31-35 were objected to. In this Response, claim 19 has been amended, claims 36-45 have been added and no claims have been cancelled. Thus, claims 19-45 are pending in the application.

Applicants invite the Examiner to call Applicants' Representative to discuss any issues with this application.

Allowable Claims

In Office Action paragraph 1, claims 20, 23-24, 26-29, and 31-35 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but noted as being allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants thank the Examiner for this notice of allowable claims.

Claims 36-45 have been added in which allowable claims are rewritten in independent form. Claim 36 corresponds to claim 20, claim 37 corresponds to claim 23, claim 38 corresponds to claim 24, claim 39 corresponds to claim 26, claim 40 corresponds to claim 27, claim 41 corresponds to claim 28, claim 42 corresponds to claim 29, claim 43 corresponds to claim 31, claim 44 corresponds to claim 32, and claim 45 corresponds to claim 35.

Applicants submit that claims 36-45 are allowable.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102

In Office Action paragraph 3, claims 19, 21, 25, and 30 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Otto (US 5,703,943). Applicants respectfully disagree.

Applicants' invention, as claimed in claim 19, relates to the inter-working of an automatic call distribution system (ACD) in an interactive voice response system (IVR). Both the interactive voice response system (IVR) and the automatic call distribution system (ACD) are connected to - not incorporated in - a communication system (KS). The method of claim 19 has been amended to clarify that the interactive voice response system (IVR) and the automatic call distribution system (ACD) are connected to a separate communication system (KS) of the

communication network. Accordingly, the method of claim 19 connects both the interactive voice response system (IVR) and the automatic call distribution system (ACD) to the separate communication system (KS) rather than incorporating the interactive voice response system (IVR) and the automatic call distribution system (ACD) into the communication system (KS). The reference letters are intended for convenience and reference to the drawings and are not intended to limit the claims.

The connection of the interactive voice response system (IVR) to the communication system (KS) can be implemented by a standard subscriber interface by means of coupling to a standard subscriber line module (SLM) of the communication system (KS), for example. The automatic call distribution system (ACD) can be connected to the communication system (KS) by an application connectivity link (ACL), for example. Both the ACL and SLM are standard interfaces of common communication systems.

Applicants' invention provides advantages. For example, the communication system (KS) does not incorporate the interactive voice response system (IVR) and the automatic call distribution system (ACD) into the communication system (KS). The communication system (KS) does not require adaption in terms of customized hardware and/or software in order to practice the inventive method. The communication system (KS) can be designed arbitrarily using standard interfaces to connect to the interactive voice response system (IVR) and the automatic distribution system (ACD). Another advantage of the present inventive method is that the interactive voice response system (IVR) transfers a request to reserve an agent from a calling communication terminal equipment (KE) to the automatic call distribution system (ACD). The automatic call distribution system (ACD) instructs the communication system (KS) via the standard ACL interface that the present connection of the communication terminal equipment (KE) is to be transferred to the agent communication terminal equipment (AKE) of the available agent. Thus, a request for reserving an available agent is implemented without influencing the communication system (KS) as the already existing connection is merely transferred within the communication system (KS). See, for example, the specification at page 3, lines 25-29.

Turning to Otto, Otto shows in Fig. 1 a switching system (1) having a unitary integration of a call control program (13) (ACD), a speech recognition unit (26) and a speech synthesizer (28) into a switching network (20). The unitary structure of the Otto switching system (1) and thus, also the method of Otto, is significantly different from Applicants' invention, in which the

interactive voice response system (IVR) and the automatic call distribution system (ACD) are connected to (not part of) the separate communication system (KS). The Otto switching system (1) is specifically designed to serve as an automatic call distributor as part of a call center. As such, Applicants submit it would not be obvious to modify Otto to connect the Otto call control program (13) and the speech recognition unit (26)/speech synthesizer (28) to a separate communication system.

Furthermore, the speech synthesizer (28) and the speech recognition unit (26) of Otto are considerably different from Applicants' interactive voice response system (IVR). The speech synthesizer (28) of Otto is provided to generate vocal information for a calling subscriber in order to inform the subscriber about the status of connecting his call to an agent or to inform the subscriber about options in the event that an agent is not available. For this purpose, a prompt to offer voicemail to the calling subscriber may be generated (Otto, Fig. 5B, 233), the caller may be prompted to select the options of being connected to a different agent or leaving a voicemail for the original agent (Otto, Fig. 5C, 251), or an announcement may be made to the caller that the call is being placed on hold and so forth. As to the speech recognition unit (26) of Otto, the speech recognition unit (26) is provided to translate a spoken number into computer processible digits.

In contrast, the present invention provides an interactive voice response system (IVR) which is not characterized by a mere provision of an automatic call distributor with a speech synthesizer and a voice recognition system. Rather, the interactive voice response system (IVR) is an interactive process which allows a calling subscriber to obtain information stored in a database, and can be menu driven, for example. For example, the information requested by the calling subscriber can be investigated by a dialogue-based process with the interactive voice response system (IVR) without the aid of an agent. Yet another advantage of the present invention is that the agent is called only in the event that the calling subscriber does not receive the desired information by the voice conversation with the interactive voice response system (IVR).

Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 19 is allowable over Otto.

As to the other claims rejected in view of Otto, Applicants refer to the above comments in view of Otto.

Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that the §102 rejection has been overcome.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

In Office Action paragraph 5, claim 22 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Otto in view of Morganstein et al., (US 5,020,095). Applicants respectfully disagree.

As to Otto, Applicants refer to the above comments on Otto in response to the §102 rejection. Furthermore, Applicants submit that Morganstein et al. does not remedy the deficiencies of Otto, if Otto and Morganstein et al. are even properly combinable.

Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that the §103 rejections have been overcome.

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that the patent application is in condition for allowance and request a Notice of Allowance be issued.

Respectfully submitted,

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